

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 089193

70

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R 011833Z MAY 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, XY

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR CONFERENCE ON APPLICATION OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY TO SAHEL DROUGHT

1. STATE AND AID HAVE GIVEN FURTHER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S PROPOSAL AS OUTLINED IN DAKAR 1488. NEVERTHELESS, THE RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED IN STATE 61322 AND AT ABIDJAN MEETING OF MARCH 29-30 ABOUT THE US TAKING THE LEAD IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE RELATED TO AFRICAN DROUGHT AND CLIMATIC CHANGES STILL HOLD. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA) WOULD BE THE MOST SUITABLE SPONSOR FOR AN AF CONFERENCE WORKING PERHAPS WITH UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM (UNEP) REPRESENTATIVES. IN VIEW OF UNEP'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE AREAS CITED BY SENGHOR, WE BELIEVE IT COULD PLAY A

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PAGE 02 STATE 089193

MAJOR COORDINATING AND SUPPORTING ROLE. THE US WOULD ALSO

BE WILLING TO ASSIST IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPING A CONFERENCE OF THIS KIND. AID'S EXISTING CONTRACT WITH THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE RE THE SAHEL COULD BE EXPANDED TO PERMIT US PARTICIPATION THROUGH THE NAS PROVIDING A PRESTIGIOUS, SCIENTIFIC LINK (HAS HAS ALREADY DONE SOME INVESTIGATION OF CLIMATIC FACTORS IN THE SAHEL.)

2. THE GENERAL QUESTION OF DROUGHT AND CLIMATIC CHANGES, PARTICULARLY IN THE MONSOON REGIONS, IS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE US. THE SECRETARY, AS YOU MAY KNOW, SAID IN HIS

UNGA ADDRESS ON APRIL 15:

"... THE POOREST NATIONS, ALREADY BESET BY MAN-MADE DISASTERS, HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY A NATURAL ONE: THE POSSIBILITY OF CLIMATIC CHANGES IN THE MONSOON BELT AND PERHAPS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL FOOD AND POPULATION POLICIES ARE OMINOUS. THE UNITED STATES PROPOSES THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS AND THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION URGENTLY INVESTIGATE THIS PROBLEM AND OFFER GUIDELINES FOR IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL ACTION."

3. WE LEAVE TO THE EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT HOW AND WHEN TO REPLY TO SENGHOR. WE WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, HE WOULD CONSIDER SERIOUSLY A POSSIBLE INITIATIVE FROM THE ECA WITH UNEP SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF ANY CONFERENCE OF THE KIND PROPOSED. WE ASSUME HE WILL ALSO DRAW ON THE RESOURCES OF THE WMO, ICSU AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. ALTERNATIVELY, SENGHOR MIGHT WISH TO BROACH SUBJECT TO UNSYG'S OFFICE, PARTICULARLY TO BRADFORD MORSE WHO HAS PLAYED COORDINATING ROLE FOR UN AND WHO HAS COMPILED INFORMATION ON A LARGE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES ALREADY SCHEDULED WHICH TOUCH ON PROBLEMS AFFECTING SAHEL. FYI SEVERAL MEMBERS NAS PANEL ADVISING AID ON SAHEL HAVE SERVED AS ADVISORS TO MORSE ON SAHEL QUESTIONS. END FYI. RUSH

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